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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

June 17, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VIRGINIA FOXX to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

USING WINNING FORMULA OF SAN ANTONIO SPURS ON AMERICA'S PROBLEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, like many Americans, I was transfixed by the magnificent victory not just in game five of the NBA finals, but by every one of these amazing games, a superb effort against a very good Miami Heat team, dominated by a person widely acknowledged to be the best player in the NBA.

As a lifelong Portland Trail Blazers fan and one who remembers the excitement of being a long-suffering season ticketholder who had the joy of being in our coliseum when we won the NBA championship more years ago than I care to remember, I appreciate the dynamic that is involved with these five NBA championships over the last 17 years.

I confess, I have also become a fan of the Spurs, their organization, their coach—Greg Popovich—but also their approach to the way they do business. They have some important lessons for America.

I feel very strongly that we on Capitol Hill and, indeed, most Americans could learn a great deal by paying attention not just to the victories, but how the Spurs became the most successful sports franchise in any sport over the last 2 decades.

My son was privileged to play for Coach Popovich when he was head coach of the Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens, a Division III small basketball program. In fact, they had to put two colleges together, Pomona and Pitzer, to form one team. His values forged a small but excellent college athletic program that is very much in evidence in the Spurs today.

First, they look for talent wherever they find it around the globe. It meant players not just from the United States, but I think there are eight different countries represented on that roster.

There is a respect for each of them having a role as a team member, their commitment to the larger concept of winning for the greater good. Isn't it interesting that their postgame interviews are in six or seven different languages and that these players have been able to come together and meld into a unit?

The leadership of the coach is very much in evidence when you watch them in action. Coach Popovich is not

a celebrity vying for the spotlight. Indeed, you could barely see him in the postgame victory television interviews. It was focused on the team.

Today, Americans are facing challenges that they sometimes feel are beyond our capacity. They are certainly beyond our capacity as individuals to deal with. We are facing a challenge that is similar to the rigors of a long, 82-game basketball season and a seemingly interminable playoff schedule.

Our challenges of reducing gun violence, of saving the planet from even greater carbon pollution and disruption from global warming, empowering our kids to protect them from the scourge of illegal drugs, rebuilding and renewing a country that is falling apart, these are challenges today that actually we know how to fix. They are all areas where progress is vital.

They seem to be intractable, but all could unite Americans to deal as a country on things that, individually, we could not make progress on. These all have characteristics in common with the success of Coach Popovich and the Spurs. These are long-term issues. They require careful thought. They require hard work and investment, and most of all, they require working together with an eye on our ultimate goals.

I would hope that, in the midst of the partisan rancor here in Washington, D.C., and the deep divisions among our citizens who yearn for simple answers to complex problems—which politicians are all too eager to provide—that we can think about the Spurs' success, a visionary and patient coach bringing people together to work with maximum effort, dealing with the fundamentals, and not quitting. That is what America needs today.

Congratulations to the world champion Spurs. Let's try your winning formula on America's problems.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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